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30 January 2024

Hon. Lewis A. Kaplan
Daniel Patrick Moynihan
United States Courthouse
500 Pearl St.
New York, NY 10007-1312
USA

Dear Judge Kaplan

I am writing this letter both as a long-time member of the effective altruism movement and a long-time sceptic / critic of the entire cryptosphere.

Allow me to share just a couple of stories about Sam Bankman-Fried that – I believe – reflect his character.

Effective altruists aspire to give 10% of their income to high-impact causes. At his job as an intern at Jane Street Capital, Sam Bankman-Fried gave the majority(!) of his earnings to charity. This case must rank as the first time in the entire history of criminal justice where the defendant donated most of his earnings at his previous job to charity. (I found this charitable giving so admirable - and astonishing – that I needed independently to verify it. Yes: the recipients were the Center for Effective Altruism, 80,000 Hours and the Humane League.)

The second story I'd like to share with you relates to Sam Bankman-Fried's ethical veganism. I don't know whether you believe that vegans are noble idealists trying to make the world a kinder place – or just cranks who can get on one's nerves! Either way, I've been impressed at how inside prison before, during, and after his trial, Sam Bankman-Fried has consistently stuck to his principles. (As a vegan, I would have weak-mindedly reverted to vegetarianism inside – just to survive.) So here we have a person who (literally) wouldn't hurt a fly incarcerated in a place that wasn't built for folk with such soft hearts.

Therefore, the reason that I'm writing you this letter is to ask a (naive?) question. Would it be possible to temper justice with mercy? Instead of wasting years of his life rotting uselessly in prison, could Sam Bankman-Fried be allowed to spend the rest of his working life in a regular job earning a regular income to repay FTX depositors? Humbling, yes – but a win for everyone involved. (Please forgive the presumption: I'm sure you don't need unsolicited advice from a Brit! I just wanted to convey my reasons for wondering if there are humane alternatives to incarceration?)

Yours sincerely



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